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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 8493
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 4070
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1486
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AUG 5272
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 9805
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 2731
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 2587
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/13/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [SNAR](#) [CO](#) [HO](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH FM ON COLOMBIA AND
HONDURAS

Classified By: Ambassador P. Michael McKinley for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The Ambassador met with FM Jose Antonio Garcia Belaunde on August 11 to discuss the Colombia "non-bases" issue and Honduras. Garcia Belaunde imparted two key messages: (A) We are not out of the woods on the Colombia DCA controversy, and B) the USG needs to be seen as doing considerably more on Honduras or "it risks losing the game." The exchange below should be seen in the light of President Garcia and FM Belaunde's strong support for Uribe (evinced during Uribe's August 4 visit to Lima) and high praise for the way the USG handled the first few weeks of the Honduran crisis. End Summary.

Colombia

12. (C) FM Garcia Belaunde told the Ambassador there were two discussions at the August 9-10 emergency UNASUR meeting in Quito. The Foreign Ministers were serious and measured, even the GBRV's FM Maduro, Garcia Belaunde said. By way of explaining the dynamic, he mentioned two themes - Colombian efforts to improve the efficacy of its battle against narco-terrorism, and its neighbors' focus on the potential threat stemming from expanded US military defense cooperation in Colombia. The discussion focused on how to bridge the two differing views. Leaning left were Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, and presumably Paraguay - outwardly willing to accept the sovereignty argument, but wanting greater transparency and "negative" guarantees. FM Garcia Belaunde said he, as the GOP's representative, pursued a middle course. Among the options he noted was a UNASUR document or statement, signed by Colombia, assuring that the "bases" were not for offensive purposes; that is, something that clarified what would NOT happen as a result of the US presence (the "negative" guarantees).

13. (C) Garcia Belaunde said that in the discussion among the moderate countries (i.e., not Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador), Brazil was the most forceful in arguing for guarantees. At that point in the conversation, Ambassador McKinley (drawing from reftel) presented our arguments and explanations regarding the USG's long-standing cooperation with and presence in Colombia. Garcia responded that that alone was "no longer the issue" and that Uribe's explanations were insufficient. He observed that the optics of the DCA needed to be dealt with on a continental basis, through

UNASUR. He recommended that the Secretary consider calling a meeting of UNASUR FMs on the margins of the next OAS FM summit.

14. (C) FM Garcia Belaunde indicated that the discussion among the Presidents descended into the equivalent of a street brawl. All had been under relative control until Chavez spoke, and the result of his bombast was later seen in the media. Discussion among FMs on August 9 had agreed on a follow-on August 24 UNASUR FMs meeting in Quito, framed around a general discussion of regional issues such as security cooperation, the prospect of an arms race etc. President Kirchner said the U.S.-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) issue was too serious for FMs, and offered to host a presidents meeting in Argentina instead.

Honduras

15. (C) FM Garcia Belaunde said the US needed to "drive a stake" into de-facto Honduran President Micheletti, adding that this was the view of FMs Bermudez of Colombia and Fernandez of Chile, as well. Fair or not, he said that the US was losing some of the political capital it gained at the beginning of the Honduran crisis, and was now seen as capable of doing more. FM Garcia Belaunde suggested to his counterparts that an OAS ultimatum not recognizing upcoming Honduran elections, if Zelaya was not allowed to return, could be counter-productive - but his real hope was that Zelaya returned in time for an orderly transition of power.

16. (C) When Ambassador McKinley mentioned the US was working within an OAS context, as one nation among others, FM

responded that this was not sufficient and asserted that a higher profile role by the US Secretary of State would be helpful. Garcia Belaunde concluded by saying that his Chilean counterpart (FM Fernandez) was going to raise the same points regarding Honduras with the US Ambassador in Santiago.

Comment: Advice of Close Regional Partner

17. (C) Colombian Embassy contacts have told us that President Uribe got a warm welcome reception and sympathetic ear during his stop in Lima, and that Colombia considers Peru to be its only real ally in the region. The FM's considered reflections and advice concerning the U.S. role in helping address these two controversial issues should be seen in that light. End Comment.
MCKINLEY